

9 FEBRUARY 1981

THE INTELLIGENCE WAR SOVIET 'PSYWAR' ON POLISH UNIONS

By ROBERT MOSS

RUSSIAN intervention in Poland may provide an early test for the Reagan Administration, and the prospect dominates the current debate in official Washington circles over the future of the grain embargo imposed by former President Carter.

But, fearing bitter resistance from the Poles and the international political fallout that a military invasion would inspire, the Soviet leadership appears to be seeking to undermine the Polish workers through more subtle means.

In concert with the present Polish leader, Mr Stanislaw Kania, the man who was formerly responsible for the secret police, the KGB, is now helping to orchestrate a programme of psychological warfare and provocation intended to divide and discredit Solidarity, the free trade union movement.

Not the least of Solidarity's achievements has been to remind the world that the principle of the 40-hour week is not recognised in the "workers' state."

A key element in the Soviet "psywar" campaign is the attempt to prove that the workers' revolt in Poland has been prompted by sinister "foreign interests" and Western intelligence agencies.

Such predictable propaganda claims, emanating openly from Moscow, would be likely to excite only ridicule and contempt among the target audience.

It is vastly preferable, from the Russian's viewpoint, to be able to play back allegations that have already been published abroad.

A routine task of the KGB's Service 'A', responsible for disinformation, is to arrange to insert items in Western publications which can then be reprinted in the Soviet media and other outlets controlled by Moscow.

Agree magazine used

A choice example of disinformation against the Polish unions appears in the Feb-April issue of *CounterSpy*, a Washington-based magazine that was founded by a radical collective including the CIA's "ideological defector" Mr. Philip Agee, for the primary purpose of naming CIA officers and agents around the world.

A former CIA Director, Mr William Colby, held *COUNTERSPY* responsible for the murder in 1975 of a station chief in Athens, Mr Richard Welsh. He had been identified in the magazine.

The original *COUNTERSPY* group fell prey to internal bickering, partly as a result of the magazine's reckless habit of naming people who had no connections with the CIA as agents—and also exposing them, too, to the threat of harassment or assassination.

Today, *COUNTERSPY* is noteworthy for its undisguised sympathy for the Soviet line, and is prominently displayed in the handful of bookshops controlled by the American Communist party.

Articles in *COUNTERSPY* justifying the Russian invasion of Afghanistan as a response to undercover CIA intrigues were quoted at length in the Soviet media.

The target for the latest *COUNTERSPY* attack is the creditable effort by the American trade union federation, the AFL-CIO, to provide financial support and means of communication—a printing press and typewriters—for Solidarity.

The article by John Kelly contends that solidarity between American and Polish trade unions constitutes a threat to "Polish workers' sovereignty"—a phrase that could have been lifted, unedited, from the pages of *PRAVDA*.

According to the article, the AFL-CIO works to a "secret agenda" mapped out by the CIA.

Many pages are devoted to allegations about past collaboration between the labour federation and the CIA in Western Europe and Latin America.

"AFL-CIO aid has always been interventionist," Mr Kelley declares, "and its support for the new Polish unions has to be seen against this background."

Trojan Horse play

The "psywar" value of the article becomes fully apparent only in the concluding paragraphs, which purport to describe the training courses for foreign trade unionists in the United States that have been arranged, over many years, by the Department of Labour in consultation with the AFL-CIO.

"Many of the graduates" of these courses, according to *COUNTERSPY*, have served as Trojan Horses, often disversing CIA money with a secret agenda for installing an AFL-CIO bureaucratic leadership in their own unions.

The article then proceeds to name seven Polish unionists who attended courses in Washington under this programme in the mid-1970s.

"It is vital for them and their fellow workers to know," Mr Kelly opines, "that they have been exposed to programmes secretly exploited by the CIA."

Therefore, they must be called upon to "explain themselves" to their "fellow workers"—a locution that has an ominous sound in the context of a Communist police state.

It is significant that, while much of the Left-wing Press has expressed sympathy for Poland's independent unions,

or has at least refrained from attacking unionists who are fighting for industrial democracy and individual liberty against a Communist system, an American publication that spearheaded the anti-CIA campaign has shown no such inhibitions.

The community of interest between the anti-intelligence lobby in Western countries and the Soviet regime is once again on display. And *COUNTERSPY* has played midwife in a major "psywar" operation against Poland's courageous trade unionists.